



Gateway Gazette

Volume 1, Issue 2

Winter 2004

SGA Gears Up for Kwanzaa Celebration

Extending a tradition that is almost as old as RCC itself, the college will host a feast to celebrate the last day of Kwanzaa on December 31st. Kwanzaa is a celebration of African culture that emphasizes community and family and reinforces seven core principles. The festivities last seven days, one day for each of the principles, which include Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity and

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FACULTY, STUDENTS AND STAFF: UNITE!



Photo: MCCC Web Site

Same Enemy, Same Fight! Demonstrators from Massachusetts community colleges stormed the Governor's mansion in November to protest the budget cuts that have financially squeezed the entire RCC community.

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R.C.C.—Roxbury "Courteous" College Greg Daniel

Roxbury - Students at Roxbury Community College are vexed by the lack of competent administrators and the lackluster customer service being offered at the school. Rude and insufficiently trained staff can make small problems into large ones. Far too often, when confronted with a problem, they don't

know whether it's their responsibility or that of another department. Unfortunately, when in doubt, they are quick to assume the latter. Students complain of staff members' inability to clear up such common problems as Financial Aid confirmation, class schedules or

even whether a student is physically disabled.

Many students are overcome with feelings of frustration when a discrepancy appears in their schedule, tuition balance or other academic files; they dread the merry-go-round through administrative offices needed

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Gateway Gazette

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Milton Samuels

Dear Readers,

Thank you so much for your wonderful response! We were thrilled to hear that our first issue was well received and appreciated. Please continue to keep the feedback coming as we strive to fully realize our mission of bringing you the most important RCC news and to celebrate your accomplishments and represent your concerns. Though you may not always agree with the stance that we take or the decisions we make, please remember that our ultimate goal is to improve the communication and the dialogue at the school. Through this forum, we are taking the first steps toward doing so.

Thanks again,
Ann Marie McCarrick

*Congratulations to **Richard Agbortoko**, winner of our logo contest! Richard's logo will appear on the cover of our next issue.

To offer feedback on this issue or get involved with the next, email rcnews@roxbury.edu.



Photo: Kathleen Nichols

Happy Holidays from the Gateway Gazette staff!
From left to right, front row: Patrice Rose, Ann Marie McCarrick, Judy Kahalas, Manu Carpenter; Back Row: Dean Conway, David Updike, Adell Williams, Tracy Moore, Everest Onuoha, Barry Carias, Daniel Noel and Serene Baldwin.

Dear Gateway Gazette,

I want to commend the editorial staff and faculty advisors for the first issue of the student newspaper, as well as take this opportunity to formally welcome our students and faculty to campus. The student paper provides both a platform and voice for matters of concern and interest to students at RCC. As part of the rich tradition of a free press in a free society, I hope the paper will perform the time-honored role of disseminating accurate information, educating its public and serving as the watchdog of its community.

RCC is the gateway through which

many students will pass to achieve their goals for a better life. Whatever the dream – be it to earn an AA degree, transfer to a four-year college, get a job, change a career, or earn a higher income – the clearer that the students articulate their aspirations, the better the faculty and administration will be able to meet their needs. Furthermore, students have a representative on the Board of Trustees, Ms. Maryann Silva, whose task it is to advocate for students and inform the board of students' expectations to

assist them to attain their goals. It was somewhat disappointing, therefore, that the first issue of the paper did not address these areas, but instead dealt with the negatives in the institution's environment on its front page. It is comforting that there will be many more issues of the Gazette, thus enabling it to speak and highlight the institution's positives.

Again, congratulations and warmest best wishes.

- Patrick L. N. Seyon,

Dean, Liberal Arts Division

Dear Gazette,

The first edition was awesome. It was way more than I expected from a school with limited resources and funds. I'd like to see comics, men and women's basketball scores, the schedule for workshops at the learning and writing centers and maybe the menu for lunch in the cafeteria. I'm looking forward to the next several issues of the paper. Great job!

- Lori Texeira, Student

LETTERS
to the
GAZETTE

SGA REPORT

Giving Thanks to Students and Community

On Tuesday, November 23rd, Roxbury Community College's Student Government hosted a catered Thanksgiving dinner in the cafeteria for faculty, students and staff. Almost 300 people were there to enjoy traditional Thanksgiving cuisine. Dr. Terrence Gomes, RCC President, and Stephanie Janey, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, addressed the attendees with inspirational words. Plates were also prepared ahead of time for the evening students and professors as well, so the whole college was able to enjoy the festivities. "Everyone was very happy about it," said president Emmanuel Lafalaise.

"SGA feels good about the event."

The next day, SGA members used their donations from the Thanksgiving Can Drive to make gift baskets. Though they did not receive as many contributions as they would have liked, they were still able to put together five bas-

kets consisting of canned goods, a turkey and a chicken. Vice President Azure Parker, Treasurer Giselle O'Brady and Representative Casey Singleton along with others took the baskets to the Roxbury Multi-Service Center on Blue Hill Avenue, where they were distributed to five local families just in time for the holiday.

SGA would like to thank those who made the two events successful, including Kelly Saint Vil, RCC alumna, and Gillian Thomas, Student Representative, for their part in the realization of the can drive, as well as Dr. Gomes and Vice President Janey for their words of encouragement at the dinner.



Members of student government presiding over the Thanksgiving dinner which they hosted at RCC on November 23rd. From left to right: **Emmanuel Lafalaise, Azure Parker, Casey Singleton, Danielle Cunningham, Giselle O'Brady and Othuman Ntale.**

Photo: Ann Marie McCormick

More SGA News... The SGA Newsletter and Gateway Gazette are joining forces to bring you more comprehensive college news... President **Emmanuel Lafalaise** met with Acting Library Director **Mark Lawrence** to discuss the printing fees in the library. Thanks to Mr. Lawrence for lowering the fees by five cents a page... The library also had new copy machines installed... If you want to post flyers, they must be approved and stamped by Student Activities in Room 317 of the Student Center. Otherwise, your flyers will be taken down... Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of the SGA Report: **Emmanuel Lafalaise, Gillian Thomas, Giselle O'Brady and Elizabeth Clark.**



Photo: Ann Marie McCormick

Congratulations to **Maryann Silva**, who was chosen to serve as the Student Representative on the RCC Board of Trustees for the 04-05 academic year.

Student Government Association

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
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Preparation

There is a traditionally established way of celebrating Kwanzaa. We should therefore observe these guidelines to make our Kwanzaa the most beautiful and engaging one and to keep the tradition. Without definite guidelines and core values and practices, there is no holiday.

First, you should come to the celebration with a profound respect for its values, symbols and practices and do nothing to violate its integrity, beauty and expansive meaning.

Secondly, you should not mix the Kwanzaa holiday or its symbols, values and practice with any other culture. This would violate the principles of *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) and thus violate the integrity of the holiday.

Thirdly, choose the best and most beautiful items to celebrate Kwanzaa. This means taking time to plan and select the most beautiful objects of art, colorful African cloth, fresh fruits and vegetables, etc. so that every object used represents African culture and your commitment to the holiday in the best of ways.



Kwanzaa information is from
www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org.

KWANZAA CELEBRATION

(Continued from page 1)

Faith. "Kwanzaa is an important African American holiday," stated Student Representative Gillian Thomas, "but it is not exclusive to African Americans...[It's] for blacks throughout the Diaspora."

Each night of Kwanzaa will be sponsored and hosted by a local social, civic or community organization, and the seventh and final Feast

First, a central place in the home is chosen for the Kwanzaa Set. A table is

then covered with a beautiful piece of African cloth. Then, the *mheko* (mat) is placed down and all of the other symbols are placed on it or immediately next to it to symbolize our rootedness in our tradition. Next the *Kinara* (candle holder) is placed on the mat and the *mishumaa Saba* (seven candles) are placed in the *Kinara* (candle holder).

The colors of Kwanzaa are black, red and green: black for the people, red for their struggle, and green for the future and hope that comes from their struggle. Therefore there is one black candle, three red and three

Procedures

(creativity) and are placed to the left of the black candle. The green candles represent the

principles of *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *Nia* (purpose) and *Imani* (faith) and are placed to the right of the black candle. The black candle is lit first on the first day of the celebration. And the remaining candles are lit afterwards from left to right on the following days. This procedure is to indicate that the people come first, then the struggle and then the hope that comes from the struggle.

And then the *mazao* (crops), and ears of corn are also placed on the *mheko*. At least two ears of corn are placed down on the mat regardless of whether there are children in the immediate family or not, for the children of the community belong to all of us, and every adult in African tradition is considered an immediate or social parent. Next the *kikombe cha umoja* (the Unity cup) is placed on the *mheko* (mat). It is used to pour *tambiko* (libation) to the ancestors in remembrance and honor of those who paved the path down which we walk and who taught us the good, the *Tamshi* and the beautiful in life. Then African art objects and books on the life and culture of African people are also placed on or next to the mat to symbolize our commitment to heritage and learning.

Celebrating Kwanzaa

green candles. These are the *mishumaa saba* (the seven candles) and they represent the seven principles. The black candle represents the first principle *Umoja* (unity) and is placed in the center of the *kinara*. The red candles represent the principles of *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics) and *Kuumba*

night will take place at RCC. Ms. Sheiry Smith, a former RCC student who now works as the Associate Dean of Academic Advising, has been an instrumental force in organizing the Kwanzaa fete since the beginning of the tradition. This year, she will be working alongside Mr. Sadiki Cambone, a community and RCC advocate for many years, as well as members from student government to ensure that this year's Kwanzaa

celebration is the best ever.

Students and community members are invited to this free event, which will take place Friday, December 31st from 7 to 10 PM. The occasion will showcase many community agencies and offer food, music and activities for children. If you would like to volunteer to help with the Kwanzaa Feast, please call Ms. Elizabeth Clark in Student Activities at 617-541-5332.

The Eid Carnival

The Roxbury Community College Muslim Students Association hosted the Eid Carnival to mark the celebration of the end of holy month Ramadan on November 20th. The occasion was very successful and attracted a lot of people including parents and their children, who enjoyed fun activities like the bouncing castle and the slide, among others. There was also music provided by an Islamic entertainment band.

The carnival brought together a lot of people who learned about



Photo: Othuman Ntale

Many parents and children attended the RCC Muslim Students Association's Eid Carnival on November 20th.

The RCC Muslim Students Association

RCC and its wonderful academic programs. We hope that many of the participants, especially the young children, will attend the college to pursue their dreams of education.

Everyone was very joyful and participated actively, including the Northeastern University Muslim Students Association and other community leaders. We would also like to thank our great sponsors, the Islamic Society of Boston and Al hudda Brothers.



Photo: Othuman Ntale

Sister Hafsa Muhamed, Treasurer of the RCC Muslim Students Association, serves popcorn to happy children at the Eid Carnival.

Caring For Our Kids

We see them almost everywhere: little children. They are all over the RCC campus. Sometimes their parents, who are students at the college, allow their children to accompany them to their classes. This can present a problem because the children are usually noisy and disruptive.

Even if no sound is coming from their mouths, they are still wandering around the classrooms, attempting to play with the other students and professors. As cute or adorable as they are, wouldn't you rather see these children in school or enrolled in day care? Why are they going to college

with their parents? Has society reached a point where these kinds of options are no longer made affordable to those that are interested? You decide.

*Send your feedback to
serene_vue@roxbury.edu.*

A Haitian Experience

During the Duvalier regime, many Haitian men and women were sent to prison for political reasons. My aunt and my father were victims of this regime. They were arrested from 1970 to 1978. My aunt couldn't survive; she died three years later. My father had a scary, terrible experience in prison. He spent eight years in prison for no reason.

He said the living conditions were inhumane. People died without food and clothes and others committed suicide

because they felt there was no hope. At that time, my mother and my three sisters and brother lived in the house alone without a man in charge.

POSTCARDS FROM ESOL

Every day, my mother prayed to God to bring back my father to the house, safe and sound. As a result of her prayers, in early 1978 my father was released from

the prison. It was a great day for the family. I was born exactly one year later. Every day, I congratulate my father for his courage and his patience. Today he lives in Orlando with my mother.

If you are studying ESOL and would like to contribute to the next issue of Gateway Gazette, please give your story to Professor McCormack, care of the Writing Center.

Nostalgia, Naïveté and the First Amendment

Judy Kahalas, Writing Center Coordinator

I went to public school in the 50's and 60's, a time of great change in the city's history and in its physical appearance. Boston was a staunchly Irish-Catholic bastion, and those of us who were ethnic minorities in the 50's were striving toward the goal of assimilation faster than you could say the Pledge. Each morning, as the teacher would enter the class, she would say, "Good morning, class." As a group, we would stand next to our miniature desks, the girls curtsying and the boys bowing. "Good morning, Miss Smith." Then, during Opening Exercises, the principal ("Don't forget P-A-L, because I am your friend") would begin with directing us in prayer over the loudspeaker. For those who had never been inside a Catholic church (and so many, like I, had not), this soon became a familiar ritual: folding our hands at the edge of our desks and repeating in unison *The Lord's Prayer* and the *23rd Psalm*. We would conclude with the Pledge, never forgetting to mention that God was watching us from above. I pictured him as a very old man with white

hair who sat on a throne and knew by name those children, particularly boys, who weren't behaving in class.

Early in November we began to decorate our classroom for Thanksgiving. The beautiful leaves we collected, the pumpkins made from orange construction paper, and Pilgrims and Indians were taped to our windows so that all who passed were reminded of the industrious children inside who were busy learning the skills of cutting and pasting. Songs were practiced, songs that lauded the "Lord's Blessing" and "His will" to make it known. This was just a practice for the real frenzy of preparing ourselves for Christmas.

Weeks were devoted to learning the carols perfectly so that our annual Christmas Concert would make our music teacher proud. We learned the best songs, fun sing-a-long tunes that put even the meanest teachers in a good mood. Soon these stern women would start wearing brouches that displayed wreaths, reindeer, or a little string that, when pulled, would make Santa's nose light up red. On the

day before the start of our weeklong Christmas vacation, we were told to put our heads down on our desk and close our eyes. A fragrant red and green box filled with candies would be placed on the desk of all the good little girls and boys.

As years passed and I was promoted along the grades, the composition of the student body changed. Soon we had classmates whose names were Suarez and Samedo, Chin and Castillo. The junior high school was a mixture of colors, making it even more beautiful than the leaves of October that were taped to the windows of those first-grade classrooms.

The underlying concept of uniting us in a common bond was now being questioned. Was the goal to be blond-haired, blue-eyed Dick and Jane, who lived in a house with a yard and a dog named Spot? My reality was quite different; my eyes were dark, I lived in an apartment in a city filled with people whose skin colors were increasingly multi-hued and I was a minority, a Jew. Students were learning to question

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ROXBURY CANTANKEROUS COLLEGE

(Continued from page 1)

to clarify such matters. "It was frustrating, because the lack of communication between departments caused the problem," said Student-A, a second year student at RCC who wanted her name to remain anonymous. "I was able to sign up for my classes, fine; I took 5. However, when I went to the registrar's office to get registered, they told me there was a problem in the computer. I learned that they had me on record as a disabled student under 18, meaning that my parents would have to be notified to allow me to take more than one class." Student-A's problem was - by all accounts - rare, but the way it was handled by RCC staff members was all too common.

"She gave me the printout and said I would have to go to admissions to get it straightened out. When I went there they told me it was fixed, [and] I should go back upstairs. When I went back up, they said it wasn't fixed, so I went back down to get it fixed again. It still didn't get fixed, so I went up and down a few more times. I asked what was wrong, but admissions insisted that there was nothing, and the registrar insisted that it was admissions' problem. They tried to get me to bring back some permission slip or something, but since it was their mistake, I was not going to do that. I had to wait inside the registrar's office for [over an hour] while they tried to find someone to take care of the problem, which was finally solved when they got the Dean of Registration to do it - and he fixed it in about 5 seconds. The whole ordeal took about 3 hours."

Student-A's office odyssey was an experience shared by many of RCC's students when something is amiss with their file. It is commonly a product of misinformation given by the staff, often brought on by the fact that many of them don't understand what information they are responsible for. Another student, Student-B, who spoke under the condition of anonymity, had a problem with clearing her Financial Aid on Registration Day. At the Financial Aid table she was told that they had not received her parents' income tax information. "They sent me back up to where their office is usually located at the Administration Building. There was a [lady] there, and she told me that the file was complete. But then the other lady, that told me something was missing, came up a few minutes after I did and [said], 'Oh! I never told her [the student] that.'"

Tensions between the administration and students frequently reach their apex during registration time. The

combination of long lines & overworked staff makes for an inherently hostile environment. Students can often find themselves waiting in the Business Office's line only to find out that their problem needs to be addressed at the Admissions Office.

What can RCC do to help clarify these mix-ups? "I understand that that's very frustrating," says Dr. Brenda Mercomes, Vice President of Academic Affairs at RCC. "We've been trying to work on a system whereby students [are not told] 'Oh no, go here. Oh no, go here. Oh no, go here.' But I think that all of us are trying to cut down on that, and trying to be able to answer (their) questions."

"Tensions between the administration and students often reach their apex during registration time... Students can often find themselves waiting in the Business Office line only to find out that their problem needs to be addressed at the Admissions Office."

Dr. Mercomes went on to suggest that signs be posted outside the various departments indicating the issues they handle. "Come here if you have a question about..." or "Come here if you need..." and "These are the things that they take care of in the Business Office" - so you're not standing in line forever; and then you get there and they (the administrators) tell you that you are in the wrong line." But she made no promises that such a plan was going to be implemented. "I know people get angry, and I don't blame them if they get upset."

While sympathizing with students' frustrations, Dr. Mercomes, who's been at RCC for just over a year, also noted that the way students express their impatience can sometimes exacerbate the problem. "Sometimes a student's anger or attitude can maybe trigger a reaction from the person [who's

trying to help them]. Sometimes [students] can be a little bit nasty - stuff happens - and I've had couple of [interactions with irate students]. And I have to take a deep breath and count [to ten - to calm myself].

"But not everybody does that. Not everybody - you know - thinks that way. So one of the things - I know we've been working on - we've had customer service training." But when asked about the last time such a seminar was held, Dr. Mercomes admits, "It was before I came. I heard there was [customer service training]. I wasn't here. But that doesn't mean that we won't try again."

Dr. Mercomes believes one of the reasons some administrators aren't held accountable for their indiscretions is for lack of proper reporting of such incidents by the victims. Students need to report these incidents immediately to the staff member's supervisor, she says. "If it happens, you need to let someone know immediately. We're not sanctioning ill treatment of students by RCC staff; trust me, we don't think that's the right thing to do. That's something that we're aware of, and that we're trying to figure out some issues to work on. But until we know who's being rude we can't discipline them."

So what disciplinary actions does RCC use to discourage further instances when a rude employee is reported? "It can affect someone's evaluation. We do evaluations every year on our staff. Suppose I got three reports [over the span of two months, that my secretary was being rude] - she wouldn't be, by the way... First I'd go to her [and say] 'This is just not going to happen here.' And if it continues, it will be a part of that person's evaluation, which could be damaging." Inquiries about whether an employee would be terminated for such behavior went unanswered. "There is a process that we follow."

When asked about the school's plans to expedite its level of service in the coming semesters, Dr. Mercomes indicated that there have already been meetings held to address these issues. When asked to elaborate, she flatly said, "Nothing I can share with you." But she was willing to share her plans to take a hands-on approach to next semester's pre-registration process, by actually manning the tables and working with students alongside her staff. "That way, if I'm doing it, I can see where some of the errors are occurring. Maybe I can see if people are being rude to other people. I'm not there to spy. But I'm there to see how we can enroll students more efficiently."

When Romney Says, 'Cut Back,' We Say, 'Fight Back!'

Ann Marie McCarrick

On Saturday, November 6th, faculty and student activists from RCC joined forces with protesters from other Massachusetts community colleges to rally in support of public higher education. The demonstrators assembled by the Arlington Heights water tower and then marched to the governor's mansion in Belmont while waving signs and chanting slogans that condemned Mitt Romney's budget cuts, all the while being tailed by drivers who witnessed the rally and pounded on their car horns to support the message.

You may have noticed the signs posted around campus: "Support Public Higher Ed," "A Deal Is A Deal," "Honor Our Contracts." In September, Governor Romney vetoed a bill that would have provided retroactive raises for all full-time faculty and staff. If it weren't bad enough that the raises were already late when they were denied, they were for such a small amount that it was a true slap in the face to not receive them. Most of the salaries were only increasing by less than one percent!

Romney's veto was in direct violation of the faculty's contract, so their union, the Massachusetts Community College Council, immediately reacted by going on "work to rule," a job action similar to a strike, though not as severe. By doing so, union members attempt to slow things down at the workplace by doing only the minimum amount of work required by their contracts, for example, by adjourning meetings before they've even begun. The janitorial, secretarial and clerical staffs are also included in the vetoed contract, and they have been hit the hardest, since

they have gone longer without raises and generally have smaller incomes. "The unions have signed contracts that require certain raises, and you would think that a Republican governor who comes from a business background would understand that a deal is a deal," asserted professor Richard Eells, president of the RCC chapter of the MCCC. Rick Doud, president of the MCCC, agreed: "It's shameful that [Romney] would deprive our faculty and staff such a modest increase when they have not had a raise in more than two years."

By refusing to honor the contracts, Romney has also weakened the faculty and staff unions and lowered morale in workers throughout the school. Most college employees believe that Romney is trying to break up their unions in an attempt to gain "brownie points" with Republicans in Washington. "In negotiations, he's basically made the demands that would destroy our unions," said Eells. "I don't think he's any friend to unions, I don't think he's any friend to teachers, and I certainly don't think he's done well by the students of Massachusetts' public higher education."

Romney definitely has not done well by the students; the number of full-time faculty at RCC has been cut by more than a third in the last several years, meaning that there are fewer classes offered, less on-campus resources and less services available to us. We have scarce resources in our library due to inadequate financial support. And since 2001, our tuition and fees have increased by 50%

while state funding for public higher education has decreased by 26%. According to Eells, Romney is so out of touch with his constituents that he does not realize how these budget cuts harm us; certainly a man so wealthy that he doesn't have to accept his governor's salary cannot understand how granting a small pay raise or inflating tuition fees by a few hundred dollars can make or break us!

Education is truly the greatest equalizer. It gives each one of us the chance to rise above our circumstances and become someone that we never would have thought we were capable of being otherwise. It opens the door to new possibilities that will benefit us greatly and that will allow our children to lead better lives. Education negates stereotypes; it forces society to look at us in a new light. When politicians decide to challenge our opportunities to gain knowledge, we absolutely must fight back.

When asked why she attended the rally in Belmont, student Shawnette Edge wasn't just there for herself; she was also there to protect her daughter's future. "We need these fundings to keep my daughter in school, to keep her updated and educated. My kid will be an 'A' student - [the first] black female president - and she's going to make sure that people like Mitt Romney don't cut funding, because education is so important and vital." We absolutely cannot allow Governor Romney to get away with his attacks on the faculty, staff and students of RCC and Massachusetts public higher education.

CHURCH AND STATE (Continued from page 5)

authority: those who illustrated the books that made us feel "different," those who believed that all Americans embraced Christian holidays and those who justified a faraway war in which too many of my classmates would lose their lives. The rigidity of the 50's classroom was giving way to an informality that led to open dialogue and learning. We were in an urban public school where real life happened around us.

The 50's were historically and falsely enshrouded in post-World War II innocence and optimism. The economic stability created a mass migration out of the city, and suburban prototypes and

their "All-American" values were imposed on the curriculum, despite the best intentions of our forefathers. In the 60's and 70's, we learned from our mistakes and evolved as a civilized society, starkly realistic, teaching our children to value diversity in culture and religion.

Centuries ago the Pilgrims came to the US to ensure that religion was neither taught nor forced on their children in public institutions. Since then, millions of people have come to the US to escape persecution because of their race or religion and to enjoy the freedom to worship, or not worship, in ways that feel comfortable. Church and state have been separated by the Constitution of the United States. This is a guarantee of our First Amend-

ment rights. Public schools and colleges provide wonderful opportunities to learn about other cultures and other religions. Religious schools provide opportunities to develop a religious perspective. In a public school, when the spirit of one religion takes predominance as the spirit of the institution, there is a clear indication that the church is intruding on the state. The boundaries need to be clear. Education is a valuable gift; it is meant to enrich and expand our frame of reference to create new thinking and to move a society forward. It should never be used to impose common values, whether religious or other, to satisfy a majority mindset. We must ensure that we do not move backward. We've been there and it doesn't work.

Experience at the Polls

I have been a registered voter for many, many years and have always been diligent in going out to my precinct to vote, whether it was for our local primary elections or for the Presidential elections, but I never thought that my right to vote or to be counted really mattered very much. That has changed this year. Since President Bush's election four years ago, much has changed within our nation. My outlook on the whole political arena had been nonchalant. I assumed that if I voted I would not be personally affected by who ever was elected. I had done my civic duty as a naturalized citizen. My views have since changed, and now I know the importance of electing a candidate into office.

Several months ago, while at my work-study position within the Admissions Office of Roxbury Community College, I was fortunate to answer the telephone when the caller asked for a colleague within the office. I say that I was fortunate because the message, which I took, piqued my curiosity. The message was related to a new program at the school called College at the Polls (CAP). I further inquired about the program and was very interested to learn more about it and how I could get involved in CAP.

Through this program, there was an opportunity to work at the Polls on Election Day. There was a mandatory meeting for all new poll workers on October 23rd at City Hall. I attended the meeting; I listened to the facilitators explain the duties the various poll workers had to perform. It was apparent how important each duty was and the need to pay attention to details at such a critical time on Election Day, while I would be working at the polls. The in-depth training

would be crucial to the success of the entire voting process.

After reading various newspapers and watching the many television ads and debates for the past months, November 2nd, the day of the election, was here. I felt good about my choice for president, and even better knowing that I would be a part of the process in assisting others to cast their ballots. The poll workers were required to show up at their designated precincts at 6:00 AM. When I got to the Elementary School, I identified myself to the other workers working at the polls. I was greeted with high spirits and offered coffee and muffins. Grateful for the eye opener, I then asked the more experienced workers, who seemed to have worked the polls for many, many years, what I needed to do to prepare the setup before the first voter came in. Many signs were hung up on the school's gymnasium walls and outside the doors to inform the registered voters of steps to vote. I enjoyed greeting and meeting the people within my community and being on the frontline. I also felt proud at the same time for everyone who gave off an aura of their enthusiasm when they stepped into the polling area or asked for help once they got to their booths to vote.

The day would be a very long one, but the duties were shifted between the clerks and the inspectors. We were prepared and ready for the very first voter who came in as early as 7:00 AM to vote. We had a total of 736 registered voters, which I think was a small number compared to some of the other precincts within the Boston area. Everyone throughout the day helped each other whenever an issue would arise and made sure that the flow of all the voters coming

Pamela F. Green

through to vote was smooth and maintained each individual's privacy as well.

By 8:45 PM the Warden, with the help of the clerks and inspectors, tallied all the ballots to wrap up for the night. Again, we all teamed up to pull down all the election materials that we had hung up earlier that morning and were ready to call it a night. In the past the final process was manual and could have taken hours to tally the votes. Since the electronic voting process was implemented, the tallying is counted electronically, so that the people who came to find out the total number of votes for their local political candidates got that information immediately and did not have to wait long for the final totals.

In all my years of voting, I had always noticed that it was the elderly who came out and sat and worked at the polls. I never saw anyone my own age or close to it working there. I even asked back then how I could take part in volunteering my time to help out at the polls. I would either get a quick response or be told just to call City Hall. I wondered if it was that the 'seasoned' workers did not want any newcomers to help out at the polls or maybe if they felt threatened that their jobs would be taken over by someone else. So when this opportunity came to me, I eagerly did all I could to insert myself as a poll worker.

I totally enjoyed the day and would absolutely like to be more involved in the future in some capacity with politics. I would also recommend that this program continue in order to give other students the ability to learn about politics and broaden their education surrounding politics.

Election 2008

Daniel Noel

On Tuesday, November 16th, John Kerry returned to the Senate, back to his job where he represents his Massachusetts constituents in the State House. He returned to Washington as a Senator and as the same person everyone remembers prior to his run for the presidency. If it weren't for Ohio, John Kerry would be all smiles, but who's to say he isn't smiling as you read this article. If things went well for John Kerry on November 2nd, Election Day, when record-breaking numbers of US citizens came out to vote for the next president of the United States, he would be unpacking in the White House in Washington. And as for George W. Bush, he would have been heading back to the Texas ranch. But the nation wanted a Republican to lead them. The race was so close that it seemed as though Kerry could taste the thrill of victory at times. Instead, the sour taste of defeat is pervasive. However, John Kerry has moved on and is back in "Beantown", taking care of business. But don't count the senator from Massachusetts out because his battles are far from over. In an article in *The Boston Globe* on November 16th, the Senator doesn't count out 2008, when he may make another run at the White House.

"It is so premature to be thinking about something that far down the road. What I've said is I'm not opening any doors, I'm not shutting any doors," Kerry added. "If there's a next time, we'll do a better job. We'll see." Also, Kerry still has over \$40 million from his campaign, allowing him to be able to run ahead of the competition already. But if Kerry were to run, who would be his competitor? What Republican would go up against the Democrats? Before Senator Kerry can stamp his ticket for 2008, he needs to evaluate the field of Democrats who can make the race interesting. One person who comes to mind is New York Senator Hillary Clinton, the former first lady. For the black community, there's Illinois Senator Barack Obama, who opened the Democratic National Convention in July with an energetic and motivating speech. Imagine Obama a presidential candidate?

The 2008 election will be electrifying as the Democratic lineup of all-stars will make an attempt to make it into the White House, while leaving the Republicans in the dust, begging for a second chance to follow in President Bush's footsteps.

OPINIONS AND EDITORIALS

And Bush Won Because... Charity Watkins

"Just remember that you sleep in safety tonight because Americans, led by our president, are willing to die for your safety." - Gary Williams, Granbury, Texas

Many people wonder, *how on earth did President George W. Bush win the election?* Although Bush is not the sharpest tool in the shed, it was obvious that if Kerry were president we would be in trouble. People feel that Bush should finish what he started; he knows more about what he's doing than Kerry or anybody else. Kerry had no solid plans except to "make a better America." When asked how he would do so, he couldn't answer the question. The more people heard him speak, the more they realized that he had no clear plan; that would be damaging to both the US and the world. The Democrats spent all their time attacking the president, but not telling the country how they would do anything different. Senator Kerry moved with the wind, whereas Bush walked through it.

Clearly, President Bush was misunderstood around the world, especially because of his portrayal by the liberal media, for example, Michael Moore's movie, *Fahrenheit 9/11*. The filmmaker made it seem as if Bush were a bad person for starting the war. That is an important issue, but there are also other issues that people considered while voting for Bush. The movie insulted people's intelligence and their memories of friends, family and colleagues who lost their lives. For the first time in many lifetimes, we have a President who does what he says he is going to do. He is not swayed by those who

disagree with him, yet he allows them their right to disagree.

People voted for George W. Bush because he's a man of strong convictions, beliefs and principles. He does what is right, even though it may be difficult. It is tough to govern in this world, but his heart is in the right place. President Bush may be aggressively small-minded in his international policies, but at least we can be certain that he will not allow terrorist actions to go unpunished as did his predecessor, former President Clinton, after the attack on the USS Cole in 2000. I feel that too many Kerry supporters have forgotten what happened on September 11th, but I can be confident that President Bush has not. He mourned and shed tears like the rest of us during the ceremonies. He spent hours comforting the families of the people lost in this horrific act of terrorism. Bush is a man of compassion and great integrity. He is willing to lead our nation in the face of adversity. He is a man that does not back down or change his mind. He will get the job done.

What some saw as stubbornness and arrogance, most saw as strength and perseverance. A strong nation needs a strong leader who has beliefs and values that are based on compassion and a true desire to uplift the lives of others. The issues of same-sex marriage, abortion and stem cell research played a significant role in our decision-making process. The threat of terrorism was a top issue in the election, but morality in the domestic and international agendas was key in making the decision to vote for our president. Bush has the moral compass. Kerry does not. He changed positions depending upon audience. There's no way we could have had Kerry going through mood swings as a president. Kerry simply wasn't a strong enough candidate and Edwards couldn't even deliver his own state.

Every issue, Gateway Gazette will delve into a controversial topic. Up next: *Is supporting or fighting in a war compatible with Christianity? What's your opinion?* Please e-mail rcnews@roxbury.edu and let us know!

Celtics 2004

So far for the Boston Celtics, the 2004-2005 season has been an even bigger battle than the one that the Pistons and the Pacers faced on November 19th. However, this battle does not involve fans throwing beer or chairs, or players jumping at fans and throwing punches at them. This battle involves the Celtics' fight for the Atlantic Division. Now that they are six instead of four, the Celtics were favorites to win their division, ahead of teams like the Philadelphia 76ers and the newly revamped New York Knicks. However, at the end of November, the Celtics are 6-8. They've been beating teams with a winning percentage above .500, but losing to teams like the Washington Wizards. The Celtics are known for blowing leads in spite of their 16 championship banners that hang in the Fleet Center, so obtaining number 17

will be easier said than done. But give credit to newly acquired coach Doc Rivers, who has held his own with a new team that includes all-star guard/forward Paul Pierce, former all star Gary Payton, former trouble maker Ricky Davis, and role players like Jiri Welsch, Raef LaFrentz, Mark Blount, Walter McCarty. With a rookie class that includes one high school player, Al Jefferson, St. Joseph's Delonte West, and Oklahoma State guard Tony Allen, this year's Celtics are capable of winning the Atlantic Division.

The 2004-2005 Boston Celtics can beat great teams in the NBA. They held their own against Tim Duncan and the San Antonio Spurs for three quarters before they let the game slip away in the final 12 minutes of play in an early November contest. At the final buzzer, Paul Pierce made a game winning shot against

the Portland Trailblazers at home. They dismantled the Knicks, who currently lead the Atlantic at 8-6, at Madison Square Garden by 34 points on November 6 and the soaring Orlando Magic also became victims to the "Green Team."

So, Boston fans, have no fear this year. It won't be like last year, when the Celtics made a meaningless playoffs appearance and were swept by the Indiana Pacers in the first round. Danny Ainge's job will not be axed because of the horrible job he's been doing. Give him credit for doing something right: he got Doc Rivers to coach a team that was approaching Chicago Bulls' status - horrible! However, let's be real; the Celtics won't win a title like the Boston Red Sox, or win 22 straight games like the New England Patriots. But they will play exciting basketball and make the playoffs, despite being third in their division and a ninth seed. It's only December and there is still plenty of basketball to be played this season and more blows to be thrown at

RCC Basketball

With winter right around the corner, this must mean one thing; basketball season has arrived to heat things up. The RCC Men's basketball team returns this year after making a lot of noise at the NJCAA Men's Division III tournament last season, in which they came in third place overall and achieved great success. They only lost one game at the tournament, but still defeated two other good teams to capture the title and bring triumph back to the city of Roxbury.

This year, the Tigers are back and playing well. With head coach Shawn Hood and assistant coaches John C. Williams and Kevin Dunn, the Tigers are back and ready to make more noise this season. Despite last season's 0-7 start, the Tigers still finished strong at 16-12. They regained momentum midway through the season, played wonderfully as a team and made their sixth appearance in the NJCAA tournament. Currently at 1-3, the Tigers are not new to this situation and getting out of it is something that they can handle. Despite a tough loss to rival Bunker Hill earlier in November, the Tigers have put that loss behind them and are ready for a rematch on January 9th at Bunker Hill. You should mark your calendar

Sports
by Daniel
Noel

danielnoel@roxbury.edu

for this game - it will be a thrilling contest between the two schools.

This year's talented roster includes many new players and three players returning from the championship team of last year. At the guard spots, John Andrade, Christian Monteiro, Gabriel Bolin, Ramon Torres, and Maceo Crowder combine with forwards Chris Dozier, William Waytes, Donald Jeffes, Godfrey Duncan, Ronald Shields, Athanis Mushi, Noel Trammell, Aneudy Dowdell and Floyd Weaver to make up a roster of strong players that will lead RCC to another title run.

Students: support your team, the champion Roxbury Tigers. All home games are free of charge and are held at the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center. Check the schedule for more information.

RCC Tigers Men's Basketball Remaining Home Games 2004-2005

Thursday, Dec. 16th

Vs. Massasoit, 7 PM

Monday, January 10th

Vs. Mass Bay, 6 PM

Tuesday, January 18th

Vs. Springfield, 6 PM

Thursday, January 20th

Vs. Briarwood, 7 PM

Wednesday, February 16th

Vs. Gateway, 6 PM



RCC 2003-2004 Men's Basketball Team

From left to right: Rasheem Cope, Godfrey Duncan, Chadrick Palmer, Christian Monteiro, Noel Trammell, David Noel, Shawn Davis, and Keiwon Crump.

Photo: www.champianships-delhi.org

Let the Light of Your Words Shine in the Poetry Corner

Compiled by Manu A. Carpenter, AKA Level

"Poetry is the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts."

This poetry corner was created by the students and for the students,
whether you just love the art of poetry or you're a poet or a poetess.

*Praise be to God,
Here is one of my pieces; I pray that you are blessed by it.
One love,
Level.*

Last night...

I was listening to the wind- while walking down the road towards my home. There's something about the breeze that caresses the back of your ear; and to actually listen to the wind- leads me to become one with the breeze.

I felt it.

I heard it.

I loved it.

So I started harmonizing to the wind-
While singing "Lord, I lift your name on high."
The wind took the melody- as I sang with my somewhat soprano voice...

So I started walking some more- which led me to think...
What would I have done if the Lord hadn't helped me?
So I started to sing with the wind-
That harmonized with breeze-
That led me to prolong my journey on the road towards home.

August 22

I was listening to the wind-
While sitting on rocks in front of an ocean.
This time the breeze was caressing my inner soul.
As I listened to the sounds of water hitting each rock and splashing onto the sands, it reminded me of love.
I guess love in God because God is love.

So I started praying and meditated while listening to the sounds of summer calmness.

The laughter of children harmonized with the breeze-
And the wind tickled my ear. I knew that it was God.

Yesterday is today's noted letter.

While driving down to New York I noticed the way we were driving. It truly felt like a hand was gliding us to our destination.

I closed my eyes and began to cry in my heart.
For I knew the sounds of harmonic melodies were being sung by angelic voices.

For God is the wind and he is the breeze, that caresses my ear and sings sweet melodies.

Natural air-
Natural sound-
Intertwine as one...
Love, life, Lord.
God.

I Promise Joseph Pathelin Policape

When I first met you, I promised to always love you.
I promise to love and be closer to you each and every day.
I promise to always sleep by your side.
I promise when you're with me, you'll want to play.

I promise to be faithful.
I promise I'll cherish you,
I promise to bring joy to your heart,
I promise to always stick by your side like glue.

I promise for my thoughts to be yours,
I promise you'll be my lover and best friend.
I promise to carry you when you can't walk.
I promise to never let you alone with the chores.

I promise to be tender and kind.
I promise to give you all my love.
I promise to cross with you the highest tide.
I promise I'll climb the highest mountain for you.

I promise to be your man,
Darling, as long as you love me too.
I promise we'll be tied together.
This is my pledge to you.
I promise, I promise,
I promise.

If there is anyone who wants to be a part of
Gateway Gazette's Poetry Corner,
send your poems to
gods_chosen_soulja@roxbury.edu.
Until next time, stay blessed and
Let the Light of Your Words Shine!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTERNSHIPS

Explore a career area of interest, strengthen your resume and earn credit at the same time. A variety of agencies and employers are ready to place RCC interns for the spring semester. You will spend 150 hours (minimum of 10 hours per week) on site. If you have taken English Composition I, and at least three courses toward your degree or certificate, please contact Jennie Thrash, Internship Coordinator at 617-933-7434 or jthrash@rcc.mass.edu for more information.

-Jennie Thrash

Haiti,
República Dominicana,
Puerto Rico,
Barbados,
Jamaica,
Cuba
and Others-

What do they have in common?
In what ways are they different?
What really is the Cuban Revolution?
Why are Guadeloupe and Martinique
part of France today?
Why is Puerto Rico part of the
United States today?
These are some of the questions you can
answer if you take
Caribbean History - SSI 113

-Virgilio F. Acevedo

NEW COLUMN

Do you have a dilemma at home?
Relationship issues? Are you depressed or stressed? Need someone to talk to, or just have a question?

"Ask Tracy"...

Coming to the next issue of
Gateway Gazette...

To ask Tracy questions, email her at tracy@roxbury.edu. Names and email addresses will not be published. Your response is greatly appreciated and will be posted in the next issue of *Gateway Gazette*. Watch for the "Ask Tracy" boxes on campus coming soon!

-Tracy Moore

YOU'RE INVITED

To the next meeting of the *Gateway Gazette*, on Thursday, February 3rd at the Writing Center. If you're interested in participating, but don't know where to start, come find out what you can do.

Take Modern Novel!

Modern Novel, ENG240, is a new literature course that focuses on reading novels with a common theme. This semester, the theme is human rights and students will have input in choosing the books. The class is listed as a Distance Learning course; it will have a website, and some work will be done online. There will be face-to-face meetings each week as well. If you are looking for a Literature/Humanities elective or an English elective that allows you to read and think about human rights in the context of imaginative literature, this is a class for you!

For more information see Prof. Nancy Teel, Rm. 3-301E, Ext. 5177.

-Nancy Teel

FACULTY AND STAFF - WE NEED HELP...

...With writing an article about Ivanildo de Araujo, former RCC student and staff member and founder of Unity Speaks. If you knew Ivanildo and would like his story to be told, please email rccnews@roxbury.edu.

Expression Through Art

The people that possess an appreciation for it view art as something beautiful. There are colorful paintings that can be viewed in the art gallery. Each painting seems to contain a story of its own. You can witness the various emotions and feelings that the painter or artist attempts to point out to their many admirers.

Fast forward to the present, where a lot is beginning to take place right here at RCC. A club is being offered to anyone who is interested in dance, poetry/spoken word, singing, stepping, etc., for the Spring 2005 semester. So, if you feel that you are a very talented individual and want to showcase your talents to those who are willing to stop and observe or listen, this is definitely your opportunity. And if you are acquainted with any artists or up-and-coming artists who also attend the College, pass the knowledge along. Otherwise... you never know when this wonderful opportunity will come again.

If you are interested, get in touch with serene_vue@roxbury.edu.

-Serene Baldwin

We Want Students Who Are Parents

Many students at RCC also have children. We want to know about the challenges that come with both raising kids and going to school for a comprehensive article in our next issue.

If you are willing to be interviewed, email rccnews@roxbury.edu. Thanks!

RCC Honors Program

RCC's Honors Program is designed to provide quality educational opportunities that are suited to the needs, wishes and abilities of its student body. The Honors program offers academically talented students a stimulating, challenging and rewarding academic experience. The Honors program provides exceptionally gifted and motivated students with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge through independent research and creative work.

Honors Program Advantages

- Automatic Acceptance into State College/University Honors Programs
- Cultural and Social Activities
- Field Trips and Conventions
- Honors Designation on Diploma and Transcripts
- Membership into the International Honors Society
- Scholarship Opportunities
- Small Classes
- Special Recognition at Graduation
- Tuition Waiver During Last Semester of Graduate Year

Admission Requirements

1. Incoming students must meet with the Honors Coordinator to discuss their academic preparation and possible placement in the Honors program. Interested students must matriculate and complete an application and have an interview with the Honors Coordinator and/or Honors Committee.
2. Honors students must meet the following requirements:
 - GPA of 3.3 or better based on a minimum of 12 credits earned toward the degree. The credits may be earned at RCC.
 - High school graduates must have a 3.3 GPA or better.
 - Two letters of recommendation from RCC faculty or high school teachers.
 - Enrolled at RCC and working toward an Associate Degree.

For more information, including program and graduation requirements, contact Dr. Onuoha, Honors Program coordinator at 617-541-5346. Set yourself apart and earn the distinction that you justly deserve as an outstanding scholar!

-Dr. Everest Onuoha

Good Luck on Finals!

| If Your Class Is... | Then Your Final Is... |
|---------------------|--|
| Monday at 8:30 | Thursday, Dec. 16th from 9-11 AM |
| Monday at 9:30 | Monday, Dec. 20th from 9-11 AM |
| Monday at 10:30 | Tuesday, Dec. 21st from 9-11 AM |
| Monday at 11:30 | Thursday, Dec. 16th from 11:30-1:30 PM |
| Monday at 12:30 | Monday, Dec. 20th from 11:30-1:30 PM |
| Monday at 1:30 | Thursday, Dec. 16th from 2-4 PM |
| Monday at 2:30 | Monday, Dec. 20th from 2-4 PM |
| Monday at 3:30 | Tuesday, Dec. 21st from 11:30-1:30 PM |
| Tuesday at 8:30 | Friday, Dec. 17th from 9-11 AM |
| Tuesday at 10:00 | Friday, Dec. 17th from 11:30-1:30 PM |
| Tuesday at 1:00 | Friday, Dec. 17th from 2-4 PM |
| Tuesday at 2:15 | Tuesday, Dec. 21st from 2-4 PM |